

also provide funds for States to improve parks for inter-cities, and other vital recreational areas. Furthermore, I want to point out that this bill leaves intact the current authority of Congress to make funding decisions about LWCF projects, as part of the annual Interior appropriations bill.

Because the appropriations have been dwindling, it has been debated whether the funds from LWCF should be taken from Federal projects and moved to State initiatives. If my bill were passed, we would not have this decade. The LWCF affects every geographic region in America, from a small park or bike trail in Flint, MI, to a wilderness area in northern Michigan. Like myself, the National Audubon Society, the Nation Recreation and Park Association, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Wilderness Society, the Defenders of Wildlife, the Trust for Public Land, the National Parks and Conservation Association, the National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers, the National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club and many more organizations who represent various interests across our country agree that the real issue here is that we are not spending enough money on the State and Federal level to conserve our Nation's heritage. As the population increases, land is quickly being developed. We must have the foresight, as our predecessors did in 1964, to realize that we must act now so that future generations will also have the opportunity to enjoy our precious public resources.

Mr. Speaker, the second bill I am introducing is the establishment of the St. Helena Island Scenic Area. St. Helena Island is a 241-acre island located in Lake Michigan about 6 miles west of the Mackinac Bridge. The island has been put up for sale by private landowners who are willing to sell it to the Federal Government. The island is contiguous to the Hiawatha National Forest.

For the last 10 years, the Michigan Lighthouse Association and the Boy Scouts of America have been restoring a lighthouse on the island that was originally built in 1873. This beautiful lighthouse and its grounds are the only development on the entire island.

St. Helena Island provides habitat for several endangered plants and animals, including the Pileated Woodpecker and the Bald Eagle. At the western end of the island, there is a 17-acre Great Blue Heron rookery which has been designated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources as a refuge.

In designating this island as a National Scenic Area, we will ensure that it is given permanent protection for the enjoyment of future generations. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of these environmental initiatives.

MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN'S CAUCUS

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 1997

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the newly formed Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus of which I am a founding member. This caucus was formed in response to the rise of kidnapping and murder of young

children in this country. Each year hundreds of thousands of American families are confronted with this unique tragedy—a missing child. In the last 30 days in Texas alone, four children have been abducted and brutally murdered. This caucus has been organized to increase the awareness of these tragic occurrences and to introduce legislation to combat these heinous crimes.

I became painfully aware of the problem of repeat sex offenders who target children when a tragic situation occurred in Arlington, TX, which is part of my congressional district. On January 13, 1996, little Amber Hagerman, an innocent 9-year-old girl, was abducted and murdered. Amber was bright and pretty and was riding her bike on January 13 when someone came along and took her away.

We don't know who took her, but we do know that a little girl, just a child, was brutally murdered and her body left to be found. This case occurred in my congressional district, but I am sure that events like this have happened—sadly—in every corner of our country, in our cities, and in the heartlands.

Whoever took Amber didn't know and didn't care that she was an honor student who made all A's and B's. They didn't care that she was a Brownie who had lots of friends and who loved her little brother dearly. They didn't care that her whole life was ahead of her and that her parents wanted to watch her grow into the lovely young woman she promised to be.

This tragedy has focused public attention on the need to toughen laws for sex offenders, particularly offenders who victimize young children.

In response to this tragedy, I introduced the Amber Hagerman Protection Act and portions of this bill were attached to the Omnibus Appropriations Act, which was signed into law on September 30, 1996. The Amber Hagerman Child Protection Act expands Federal court jurisdiction over repeat child sex molesters who cross State lines and creates a two-strikes law which mandates life in prison after a second offense. The act also expands the death penalty. Prior to the enactment of the Amber Hagerman Act, Federal law provided for the death penalty on the first offense when a child is killed on Federal property or is kidnapped and taken across State lines. The Amber bill adds the death penalty when the person who murders the child has cross State lines with the intent of committing a sex offense.

I was very pleased that portions of this bill were signed into law last year; however, this is just the beginning. Clearly, the safety of our neighborhoods requires that additional laws be passed by Congress to keep sex offenders off the streets and it is my hope that this new caucus will learn what we can do on a legislative level.

As a caucus, we need to look at where the Justice Department is in terms of implementing a national registry system for sex offenders. Local enforcement agencies tell me that the best help they could get from the Federal Government is a national registry system for sex offenders, and we ought to make sure that this system is up and running in the near future.

Last year, the Pam Lychner Sexual Offender Tracking and Identification Act of 1996 was signed into law. This bill establishes, by law, a national registry system and will improve the minimum system the FBI is now establishing under the President's order. Prior or

the passage of the Pam Lychner Act, the President directed the Justice Department to develop within 60 days a plan for a national sex offender registry. It's imperative that an interim system be operational in the near future in order to assist the local law enforcement agencies.

This coming Sunday, May 25, is National Missing Children's Day. Back in 1983, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed May 25 National Missing Children's Day. And today, all across the country, groups will be holding candlelight vigils, memorials, and other events to increase public understanding and awareness of this national tragedy. We all need to get involved—parents, relatives, politicians, police, and other enforcement agencies—to direct attention to the problem of missing children.

It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that someday we will not need a National Missing Children's Day or caucus in Congress to combat the growing epidemic of missing and exploited children. It is my hope that someday every child in America will feel safe. It is my hope that someday every child will feel secure while riding his or her bicycle in the neighborhood. It is my hope that someday no parent will ever have to face the tragedy that Amber Hagerman's parents had to face last year. But until that day comes, we need to work together to protect this country's greatest asset—our children.

THE CRISPELL MIDDLE SCHOOL PAYS TRIBUTE AT THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 1997

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, next week about 50 students from the Crispell Middle School in Pine Bush, NY, will be touring our Nation's Capital. The high point of their visit will be a wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. The three students who will be presenting the wreath were chosen by means of an essay contest.

I found these essays to be so inspirational and informative for all of us that I ask that they be inserted in their entirety at this point in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

(By Cass Bazelow)

"My only goal is when you leave for the highschool, you can pat yourself on the back and say your proud to be in the United States", a teacher said the first day of 8th grade. It totally slipped my mind until The Vietnam War was being discussed and it was said how many men and women gave their lives, for their country. A team. We are all a team and each give our part; some greater than others but all involved, to make us the great nation that we are. Giving one's life is the greatest contribution to any team and it deserves to be honored.

He was young, 18 to 19 years of age. He just got a girl-friend and a car and was planning what to do with the rest of his life. The political parties and situations in Vietnam were of no concern to him. That was the biggest mistake in his life because a few days later, he was drafted to save a country he didn't even live in—South Vietnam. The boy couldn't even vote on righteous things in his